US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS TRIBAL NATIONS PROGRAM

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Tribal Liaison

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PROGRAM GOAL

- Implement DoD and USACE Native American/Alaska Native policies, thereby
- Empowering Tribes so that they are full partners with USACE in resolving water resources issues

USACE NATIVE-AMERICAN/ALASKA NATIVE POLICY PRINCIPLES

- Tribal sovereignty
- Trust responsibility
- Government-to-government relations
- Pre-decisional consultation
- Self reliance, capacity building, growth
- Natural and cultural resource management and protection

FACTS ABOUT TRIBES

- Each Tribe is a sovereign Nation
- The Federal government has a legal relationship (the Trust responsibility) with each Tribe based on treaties, statutes and executive orders
- Each Tribe is different from each other
- Tribes respect the military culture, yet mistrust us since it was the Army who removed them from their lands
- Tribes do not get “hand outs” – the government agreed to certain services in exchange for lands

CURRENT & RECENT ACTIVITIES

- Meeting Tribal representatives, Corps POCs, agency officials
- Established Tribal Nations Community of Practice
- Listening to and resolving issues
- Planning 3rd Corps Tribal Liaison meeting at NAE
- Assessing the state of Corps Tribal Nations program nationwide
- Continue cultural awareness training

LESSONS LEARNED

- Each District has a Tribal program and POC. Some programs more formal and visible than others
- One size does not fit all
  - Issues vary regionally
  - Successful Tribal Liaisons can be engineers, planners, natural resources specialists, archeologists or anthropologists
  - Some deal with Tribal issues constantly; others, rarely
- Most programs understaffed, under funded, unrecognized
- Most Liaison positions are not full-time; are ad hoc

ISSUES BROUGHT TO MY ATTENTION

- Management “buy in,” support and awareness at highest levels
- Tribal liaisons must be taken seriously; must have direct access to DE
- Consultation is misunderstood & inappropriately applied
- Regulatory (Appendix C) is a big problem
- Training for Liaisons & management needed
- Native hire needs to be invigorated
- Participation by Tribally owned small businesses needs encouragement
- Corps needs flexibility at local level in working with Tribes

FUNDING

HQ Program funded at 40K for FY 2006. Used for:

- Tribal Liaisons, Tribal members and others to attend conferences and meetings
- Districts to hold consultation meetings and training sessions
- Corps participation, sponsorship and support in small business, training, Native hire, & other initiatives
- Annual meeting for Corps Tribal Liaisons
- BIGGEST ISSUE: How to fund Division/District programs (what color money to use)

STRATEGIC PLAN: IMPLEMENTING THE CORPS POLICY

1. Educate & build relationships
   - Develop Corps/Tribal training for managers, PMs, liaisons
   - Establish relationships between management and Tribes
2. Strengthen program
   - Establishment of Community of Practice
   - Find other funding opportunities for program(s) & people
   - Ensure DE and TL work closely together; visit Tribes
   - Support liaisons & Tribes in attending conferences, training

STRATEGIC PLAN: IMPLEMENTING THE CORPS POLICY

3. Standardize program (to a degree)
   - Review existing regional plans for possible adoption across Divisions/Districts, but perhaps not nationally
   - Determine which program decisions would occur at District, Division or HQ level
4. Continue support/outreach on Native hire/small business/other arenas
   - Partner with academic, scientific, and other organizations
   - Support Corps participation at/sponsorship of conferences and workshops

TRIBES ARE PARTNERS

- Tribal interests are not restricted to cultural resources and reburials
- Tribes can be partners in solving water management challenges; this is important to them
- Tribes can play important roles in planning, operating and maintaining projects and programs
- Tribes embody a vast pool of untapped talent and opportunities
- Working with Tribes helps fulfill our Trust responsibilities *and* carry out the Corps mission as well